

Message Text

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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 3404

PARIS ALSO FOR UNESCO

FROM AMBASSADOR LODGE'S OFFICE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, VT, IS

SUBJECT: CHRISTIAN-JEWISH MEETING IN JERUSALEM

REF: ROME 2139, ROME 2340, TEL AVIV 1081

1. THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL LIAISON COMMITTEE OF CATHOLIC CHURCH AND JUDAISM BEGAN ON MARCH 1 AT MARTIN BUBER CENTER OF HEBREW UNIVERSITY IN JERUSALEM. THE PRINCIPAL SUBJECT OF MEETING IS A TEN-YEAR ASSESSMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN CATHOLICISM AND JUDAISM. ACCORDING TO VATICAN SOURCE THERE WILL ALSO TAKE PLACE AN EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON OTHER SUBJECTS TO BE FREELY CHOSEN BY THE TWO DELEGATIONS. IT IS EXPECTED, THEREFORE, THAT THE STATUS OF HOLY SHRINES IN JERUSALEM WILL BE ONE OF THE TOPICS WHICH THE VATICAN DELEGATION WILL TAKE UP. IN THIS CONNECTION, THERE HAVE BEEN RECENT
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CRITICISMS APPEARING IN CATHOLIC PUBLICATIONS REGARDING IS-

RAELI URBAN DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR JERUSALEM.

2. THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SEVEN-MAN VATICAN DELEGATION IS BISHOP RAMON TORRELLA-CASCANTE OF THE SECRETARIAT FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY, WHILE RABBI JOSEPH H. LOOKSTEIN, PRESIDENT OF THE SYNAGOGUE COUNCIL OF AMERICA, IS CHAIRMAN OF THE TEN-MEMBER JEWISH DELEGATION.

3. THE MEETING TAKES PLACES JUST A MONTH AFTER TRIPOLI DIALOGUE OF CHRISTIAN AND MOSLEM REPRESENTATIVES (ROME 2139, 2340), WHICH RESULTED IN A SET OF RESOLUTIONS, INCLUDING TWO VERY CONTROVERSIAL ONES -- ONE BRANDING ZIONISM AS RACIST MOVEMENT FOREIGN TO PALESTINE AND THE OTHER RECOGNIZING THE ARAB CHARACTER OF JERUSALEM AND REJECTING PROJECTS FOR JUDAZATION, INTERNATIONALIZATION OR PARTITION. THE TWO RESOLUTIONS WERE LATER REJECTED BY THE VATICAN AS NOT CONGRUENT WITH WELL-ESTABLISHED HOLY SEE POLICIES.

4. IT IS KNOWN THAT THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR TO ITALY PROTESTED THE RESOLUTIONS IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH VATICAN FORMIN CASAROLI, BUT THE CASE WAS PROMPTLY SETTLED WHEN THE VATICAN ISSUED ITS PUBLIC REJECTION OF THE TWO RESOLUTIONS. IN THIS CONTEXT THE VATICAN CONCERN FOR AN EVEN-HANDED POLICY IN MIDDLE EAST WAS ALSO OBSERVED IN POPE PAUL'S STATEMENT TO COLLEGE OF CARDINALS ON DEC 22, 1975. IN THAT ADDRESS, POPE PAUL INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT: "EVEN IF WE ARE WELL AWARE OF THE NOT TOO DISTANT TRAGEDIES WHICH COMPELLED JEWISH PEOPLE TO SEEK A SECURE AND PROTECTED GARRISON IN ITS OWN SOVREIGN AND INDEPENDENT STATE, AND BECAUSE WE ARE AWARE OF THIS, WE WOULD LIKE TO INVITE THE CHILDREN OF THESE PEOPLE TO RECOGNIZE THE RIGHTS AND LEGITIMATE ASPIRATIONS OF ANOTHER PEOPLE, WHICH ALSO HAS SUFFERED FOR A LONG TIME, THE PEOPLE OF PALESTINE." ACCORDING TO CASAROLI, THIS WAS THE FIRST STATEMENT BY A ROMAN PONTIFF PUBLICLY MENTIONING THE EXISTENCE OF THE JEWISH STATE. ACCORDING TO ANOTHER VATICAN SOURCE, THE JEWISH GOVERNMENT WAS PROMPT IN EXPRESSING ITS APPRECIATION FOR THIS GESTURE. BEAUDRY

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